

VZCZCXRO1243
OO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSA #1495/01 1201412
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 301412Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9465
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1177
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1065
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 1077
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 2060
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA PRIORITY 0972
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0070
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0511
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0461
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY 4243
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PRETORIA 001495

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR P, AF, AF/S

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/29/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: (C) ZIMBABWE: SENIOR SAG OFFICIALS OUTLINE VIEWS
TO NGO CONTACT

REF: A. PRETORIA 1447

[1](#)B. PRETORIA 0957

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

(U) This is an action request -- see para 15.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. In a series of meeting with IDASA analyst Sydney Masamvu on April 24-25, senior South African officials questioned Masamvu in detail about the situation in Zimbabwe. DepForMin Pahad made clear he held MDC leader Tsvangirai in low regard, but had a much higher opinion of MDC Secretary-General Biti. At Pahad's request, Masamvu listed

SIPDIS

three "neutral" Zimbabwean leaders who would be acceptable to ZANU-PF and the MDC: Simba Makoni, Gideon Gono, and Strive Masiyiwa. DFA DG Ntsaluba said the MDC was heavily infiltrated by the GOZ, and that Tsvangirai should lobby other African states, not Washington and London. Ntsaluba said Mugabe only acts when under pressure. Intelligence Minister Kasrils and his deputy Gilder discussed Mugabe's "pressure points" with Masamvu, noting that dissent within ZANU-PF should be "nurtured" and the MDC strengthened. ANC Secretary-General Motlanthe told Masamvu he is urging Mbeki

SIPDIS

to lobby SADC on free and fair elections in Zimbabwe now, before it is too late. It is unusual for these senior SAG officials to spend so much time with an NGO analyst like Masamvu. This suggests that the SAG lacks solid information about the dynamic in Zimbabwe and is still developing policy options. The tenor of the questioning indicates that the SAG remains committed to easing Mugabe out of power, but appears focused on installing in his place a Pretoria-manipulated government of national unity, regardless of the electoral wishes of the Zimbabwean people. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Director General Ayanda Ntsaluba met at length with Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)

analyst and close Embassy contact Sydney Masamvu (strictly protect) on April 24. Pahad requested the meeting with Masamvu after reading the March 05 International Crisis Group (ICG) report "Zimbabwe: An End to the Stalemate?", and asking who had researched the report. Following this initial conversation, Pahad set up individual meetings the same day for Masamvu with Minister of Intelligence Ronnie Kasrils and with head of the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee (NICOC) Barry Gilder. Masamvu also met ANC Secretary-General Kgalema Motlanthe on April 25, his second meeting with Motlanthe in recent months (Ref B). Pahad tried to facilitate a meeting between Masamvu and President Mbeki on April 25, but was not successful because of scheduling complications. A visibly exhausted Masamvu provided PolOff a readout of these marathon meetings on April 26.

Pahad and Ntsaluba Looking for "Neutral Faces"

13. (C) Pahad and Ntsaluba asked Masamvu pointed questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), its leadership personalities, and the role of the Zimbabwean military. Pahad made clear that he held Tsvangirai in "low esteem," but said that MDC-Tsvangirai Secretary-General Tendai Biti was "well-meaning" with a "vision for the future -- unlike his boss." Ntsaluba commented that Tsvangirai spends too much time lobbying London and Washington, and not enough time in the region. "We want to hear from Morgan in Dar and in Gaborone," Ntsaluba urged. The MDC is "heavily infiltrated," Ntsaluba commented, saying that ZANU-PF provides them with copies of MDC letters to Mbeki before the MDC letter arrives in Pretoria. "ZANU-PF is always one step ahead," Ntsaluba observed. Masamvu said he told Pahad and Ntsaluba that the MDC-Tsvangirai faction did not view South Africa as neutral since SAG officials meet with Arthur Mutambara and Welshman

PRETORIA 00001495 002 OF 004

Ncube regularly, while refusing to see Morgan Tsvangirai.

14. (C) Pahad asked Masamvu which leaders were "neutral faces" in Zimbabwe, acceptable to both ZANU-PF and the opposition. Masamvu identified three:

-- Former SADC Secretary General Simba Makoni: He remains a member of the ZANU-PF politburo, but is viewed by the opposition as a "unifier." Masamvu noted, for example, that Tsvangirai attended the funeral of Makoni's son;

SIPDIS

-- GOZ Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono: He knows the ZANU-PF system and patronized the military, but Tsvangirai can talk to him. Masamvu called Gono "pliable," someone with whom the international community could work; and,

-- Exiled Zimbabwean businessman Strive Masiyiwa: He is not tainted. He is respected by the international community, and has ties both to ZANU-PF (his uncle is Vice President Msika) and to MDC (he has quietly supported the party).

Pahad told Masamvu that these were the "same types of individuals" that he and President Mbeki had identified as potential leaders.

15. (C) Ntsaluba suggested that Mugabe is only compliant when he is under pressure. It was only following the March 11 beating of opposition leaders that South Africa was able to garner enough support for SADC to put Zimbabwe on the agenda. Ntsaluba noted that South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and sometimes Zambia and Tanzania were largely isolated in wanting to pressure Mugabe. Namibia, Angola, and Malawi remained close to Mugabe.

16. (C) Pahad asked Masamvu to prepare a five-page paper for

him by May 04 outlining his core recommendations for Zimbabwe policy. Pahad also told Masamvu that he would like to meet, together with one or two other "neutral" Zimbabwe analysts, on a weekly basis. (COMMENT: Masamvu is open to suggestions on what to emphasize in his paper. END COMMENT.)

Kasrils/Gilder Focus on Pressuring Mugabe

¶17. (C) Masamvu told PolOff that he found Intelligence Minister Kasrils and NICOC head Gilder to be the most pragmatic and focused of the SAG officials with whom he met. Kasrils stressed that the international community must keep the pressure on Mugabe, finding ways to "isolate him from within his own party." (NOTE: Masamvu suggested to PolOff that the USG and EU consider making the smart sanctions more "sophisticated" by lifting them on certain ZANU-PF officials to create mistrust within the party. Properly crafted, this strategy could further isolate Mugabe, Masamvu argued. END NOTE.)

¶18. (C) No one should take Mugabe's word that he will step down, Kasrils said. Mugabe had "strung" the SAG along during the 2004 constitutional talks. Kasrils said that the SAG knows his game. South Africa is looking at the December ZANU-PF annual congress as another opportunity to "rock the boat." If the SADC facilitation should fail, the SAG may look to the annual congress as a "fallback" event to pressure Mugabe to step down either by choice or through a non-military "palace coup." Masamvu said that Kasrils hinted strongly that the SAG supported the Mujuru faction in ZANU-PF, without explicitly stating that position.

¶19. (C) Kasrils said that the MDC needs to be strengthened to pressure Mugabe, but that he had been consistently disappointed by the party. Unlike Pahad, Kasrils acknowledged that Tsvangirai was the key opposition leader with the most support. Kasrils said that the election in 2000 was the window of opportunity for the MDC, but the party

PRETORIA 00001495 003 OF 004

missed its chance. More recently, MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai had not seized on the March 11 events to energize

SIPDIS
the party. Instead, Tsvangirai had let the momentum "fizzle," raising questions about his capacity as MDC leader.

¶10. (C) In each of their meetings, Kasrils and Gilder asked Masamvu about the role of the Zimbabwean military. When Masamvu described the various alliances within the military and their political and family links, both Gilder and Kasrils took copious notes, asking a series of detailed questions. (COMMENT: Masamvu found this surprising, since his information was common knowledge in Zimbabwe. END COMMENT.) Kasrils told Masamvu that 15-20 Zimbabwean soldiers are defecting at the border every day.

¶11. (C) In their three-hour session, Gilder asked Masamvu about the "pressure points" on Mugabe, suggesting that the key is getting Mugabe "out of the equation." Gilder and Masamvu discussed five potential pressure points:

- dissent from within ZANU-PF, which should be "nurtured";
- the deteriorating economic situation (Gilder said that South Africa was prepared to provide economic assistance to a "government of all forces");
- isolation of Mugabe, both internally and internationally;
- strengthened MDC opposition; and,
- increased regional diplomatic pressure on Mugabe.

Motlanthe Urges Regional Pressure/Soft Landing for Mugabe

¶12. (C) In their April 25 conversation, ANC Secretary General Motlanthe told Masamvu that he feared the SADC initiative might not deliver. He is urging Mbeki to work with his SADC partners to deliver a message to Mugabe now -- not later in the year -- stressing that SADC will not endorse the outcome in the 2008 Zimbabwe elections unless the GOZ makes the necessary reforms. Motlanthe said this message would be a "bomb" for Mugabe. Motlanthe also suggested that the international community begin to discuss a "soft landing" for Mugabe, making it clear to him that he will not be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court if he steps down. Motlanthe described his vision of a new formation, a "united front," emerging in Zimbabwe taking in parts of ZANU-PF and the MDC.

Comment

¶13. (C) It is highly unusual for senior SAG and ANC officials to spend so much time speaking with an NGO analyst like Masamvu, no matter how well informed he is, and to be so open and frank. This outreach indicates that the SAG lacks sophisticated information about the situation in Zimbabwe and is reaching out to multiple sources for policy ideas. Assuming that Masamvu's interlocutors are being honest with him -- and we have no reason to expect otherwise -- we are encouraged that SAG officials have no illusions about Mugabe's intentions and acknowledge (at least privately) that pressure on Mugabe must be maintained. That said, the SAG appears focused on manipulating the various ZANU-PF and MDC factions to piece together a government of national unity, instead of letting voters decide the country's leadership through free and fair elections.

¶14. (C) We suspect that Pahad's distrust of the Tsvangirai-led MDC and his search for SAG-identified

SIPDIS
"compromise" leaders tracks with Mbeki's views. Ntsaluba, Kasrils, Gilder and Motlanthe appear more focused on Mugabe's

PRETORIA 00001495 004 OF 004

pressure points and the importance of regional diplomacy. As noted in Ref A, the coming weeks might be a particularly opportune time for senior USG officials to engage the SAG on Zimbabwe.

Action Request

¶15. (C) As noted in para 6, Masamvu is willing to take our suggestions as to what he should include in his May 04 Zimbabwe paper for Pahad. We welcome Washington and Embassy Harare guidance on what, if any, input we should provide. To allow sufficient time for Masamvu to incorporate these elements into his document in his own words, we require guidance by May 2nd. We also welcome Washington and Embassy Harare reactions to Masamvu's para 7 suggestion that distrust could be sown within ZANU-PF by easing sanctions on selected individuals.

TEITELBAUM